

Bush River Community Council

October 17, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The October 2011 meeting of the Bush River Community Council (BRCC) was called to order by the Chairman, John Paff, at 6:33 p.m. in the Anita C. Light Estuary Center meeting room, Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD, on October 17, 2011. In attendance were Captain Christopher Swain, Harford County Sheriff's Office, three members of the Bush River community (Mr. Lucas, Mr. Silva, and Mr. Carr) and Bush River Community Council Board members: Chairman John Paff, Vice Chair Larry Carmichael, Harry Webster, JoWanda Lucas, Glenn Dudderar, Kathleen Leary and Secretary Mary Starks. Board members Carolyn Shea and Randy Conlan were absent.

Chairman Paff opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. Captain Swain was unable to provide the crime report again due to problems with implementing the new automated system. He recommended that we utilize the web site www.crimereports.com and input the neighborhood to keep abreast of current information. When asked he said recent burglaries seem to be suspects known to victims speculating that they could be partially a result of the poor economy and high jobless rates. Some commercial businesses have been hit...the suspects cut the phone lines first so help cannot be contacted. Business owners are being warned about this. Several attendees had questions and concerns for him which he agreed to look into: poor driving habits of county residents with a perceived lack of Sheriff's patrols presence in our community area especially at busy intersections like Route 7 and Route 40, Route 7 and Stepney Road, and Route 543 and Route 40; lack of Sheriff's patrol action to direct traffic shortly after an accident on Route 7 and Stepney Road and several Sheriff's patrol cars seen stopping a vehicle whereas not often seen patrolling and a lengthy 20 minute wait after an emergency call to the Sheriff's office from Perryman. Another issue was raised regarding a school bus speeding down Long Bar Harbor Road in the morning – a walker noted that on several mornings the bus was estimated to be doing 40 miles per hour on that small, unlined, winding 25 miles per hour-posted road with no sidewalks. A concern was raised about the safety of volunteers who the county plans to employ to remove advertisement signs in busy intersections.

The main topic on the agenda for the meeting was the proposed redistricting planned for Harford County, especially since our district would be impacted by the proposal. The plan called for Bush River community to be consolidated with the Aberdeen district which differs from our community in that it includes the town. Councilwoman Lisanti was planning to discuss the proposal and the current status of the County Council's response but was unable to attend. Chairman Paff described his understanding of the proposal and said the County Council would be addressing the plan the following night and he would attend to voice our concerns. Several attendees voiced concern over losing Councilwoman Lisanti as she has been instrumental in establishing this council as well as actively participating in the meetings and problem/issue resolutions.

The Vice Chair, Larry Carmichael announced an event to celebrate Veterans on November 10, 11, and 12 at the Bel Air Armory. There will be a parade and many displays of personal memorabilia, and Saturday will be family day with Army Equipment to view.

Minutes from the May, June and September meetings were approved as written.

A discussion was held on whether to hold council meetings monthly year round rather than having a two month hiatus in the summer. Originally, the reason for the hiatus was because the meeting

location: Elementary School would be closed for the summer. Now that we are holding meetings at the Anita C. Leight conference room that is no longer a problem. Concerns associated with the hiatus were losing momentum, missing potential action on important issues impacting the community during those months, confusing community residents about when to attend, and other community councils meet year round. A con was raised that inviting public servants to come and speak and answer questions so often was a burden on the county employees and it was thought that meeting quarterly instead of monthly was more reasonable. A vote was taken on a proposal to meet each month year round and it was passed. The Bush River Community Council will meet on the 3rd Monday of every month unless the board determines to cancel the meeting with appropriate notification to the public.

A discussion on timely notification of the meetings for the public followed since attendance was down significantly after the two month meeting hiatus for this council. Actions will be taken to increase meeting information in local media. It was suggested that our board members attend other community council meetings or have a representative come to ours. A suggestion was made that a schedule of topics for our agendas be prepared and publicized so that residents could consider which ones were of particular interest. Several suggestions on speakers were made: Representative from the Water and Sewer Department to address overflows during floods and storms; from the Anita C. Leight Conservancy, from the Parks and Recreation Department to discuss scheduling of athletic fields and possible new parks in our community. Interest in establishing new parks in Bush and Perryman was discussed. Also, a concern was raised that the Harford County Master Land Use Plan is being finalized and an open meeting will be held at Harford Community College on October 20, 2011 with display maps on the proposed changes in the 2012 Plan. Those maps can also be viewed on line under planning and zoning.

A question was asked if the high school tracks could be used by the public and if lights were available. A suggestion was made to check with Aberdeen High School, it was thought that their track was available with lights. Also, a question was raised on the follow up of an issue of railroad ties washing up on the shores of the Bush River. Representative Glass was going to contact the Railroad to raise the concern. Chairman Paff said he would follow up with him for the next meeting.

With no further questions or issues raised, the Chairman thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 8:05 pm.

Submitted by:
Mary Starks
Secretary
Bush River Community Council